



December, 1991

EPA Fact Sheet

Monsanto Elemental Phosphorus Plant

Caribou County, Idaho

The purpose of this fact sheet is to introduce you to the Superfund process and the related activities at the Monsanto Elemental Phosphorus Plant north of Soda Springs, Idaho.

In 1987, because of concerns about potential contamination of ground water, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed adding Monsanto to the National Priorities List (NPL), commonly known as Superfund. The site was formally added to the NPL in August of 1990. The listing requires a thorough investigation and, if necessary, cleanup of hazardous wastes at the site. In addition to the ground water, EPA is concerned about the potential impact of the site on air quality, surface water, and off-site soils. EPA and the company are working together to develop a plan for addressing the potential problems at the site.

Site History

The Monsanto Chemical Company has operated an elemental phosphorus plant north of Soda Springs, Idaho since 1952. The facility primarily manufactures elemental phosphorus. Phosphorus from the Monsanto plant is used for a wide variety of common applications in detergents, soft drinks, leavening agents in baked goods, toothpaste, and water treatment. Other applications include use in the metal plating and automobile industries, fire retardants, and herbicides ("Round-up").

Monsanto processes large quantities of phosphate ore at the site. Phosphate ore typically contains compounds of vanadium, molybdenum, arsenic, barium, chromium, cobalt, copper, nickel, chloride, and phosphates. The facility uses large quantities of water and has generated and stored large quantities of industrial waste materials on-site. Several old landfills exist that contain potentially hazardous substances such as vanadium pentoxide catalyst and asbestos.

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)

Shortly after listing on the NPL, EPA negotiated an agreement with Monsanto to conduct a Remedial Investigation (RI) into the nature and extent of contamination associated with the plant. EPA and the Idaho Division of Environmental Quality, will oversee the investigations to ensure they meet state and federal requirements. The areas of interest for these studies include the plant itself, surrounding areas, and local ground water. The results of this investigation will be used to evaluate the risks posed by the contamination to human health and the environment.

Monsanto will also conduct a Feasibility Study (FS) to evaluate various technologies and cleanup alternatives for the site. EPA will then select the preferred cleanup approach and submit it to the public for review and comment before making a comprehensive decision regarding cleanup. EPA's final decision regarding cleanup is called a Record of Decision (ROD).

What is happening now?

The RI/FS is currently underway. Sampling of ground water, surface water, and potential contaminant sources was done during October. The new ground water results will be evaluated and compared with existing data. This will provide preliminary information on the nature and extent of contamination and potential threats, if any, to human health and the environment posed by releases of hazardous substances from the facility. These results will be available in the Spring of 1992 in a Preliminary Site Characterization Report. Decisions will then be made as to what additional samples need to be collected to obtain sufficient information to conduct the risk assessment and feasibility study of potential cleanup alternatives.

Community Involvement

EPA representatives will be in Soda Springs this Spring to conduct additional community interviews. This will help the Agency develop a more comprehensive Community Relations Plan for the site (an interim Community Relations Plan is currently available at the information repository).

EPA is also developing a mailing list so that you can receive future fact sheets and public notices. If you are interested in the mailing list or community interviews, please return the attached form or call Dan Phalen at 1-800-424-4EPA.

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More Information?

For additional written information, an information repository has been established for documents relevant to the site:

Soda Springs Public Library
149 South Main
Soda Springs, ID 83276

You may also phone EPA at 1-800-424-4EPA

Tim Brincefield
EPA project Manager
Seattle, WA

or

Dan Phalen
EPA Community Relations Coordinator
Seattle, WA

NOTE: Many people in the Soda Springs area have expressed concern about the relationship between area Superfund sites and the Idaho Radionuclide Study/Phosphate Slag Issue. These are very different issues. The Superfund sites are primarily concerned with ground water contamination, while the "Slag Issue" is regional in nature and focuses on possible risks from exposure to low level radiation from slag in construction materials.

If you would like to be kept informed on the Slag Issue, please request that your name be added to that mailing list.

To receive future Fact Sheets
Please fill out this form and return to:

U.S. EPA
Attn: Dan Phalen
1200 6th Avenue HW-117(CR)
Seattle, WA 98105

I would like to be added to the mailing list for:

- ☐ Kerr-McGee
- ☐ Monsanto
- ☐ The Idaho Radionuclide Study

Name _____

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City _____

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☐ I would like to speak with an EPA representative.

Phone: _____



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 10 (HW-117-CR)
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle WA 98101

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